

"An Evil World"

Various Scriptures

Principle: Everyone of us in this room has experienced pain and suffering.

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33

Principle: The presence of evil is the strongest argument that reason poses against faith.

"Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known." I Corinthians 13:12

Different view of evil:

1. "No pain – no gain" view

Principle: Pain can be a gift

2. "Original Sin" view

3. "God is in control" view

"You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance that the Lord will give you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you." 2 Chronicles 20:17

"Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still." Exodus 14:13, 14

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28

How does God act in the face of evil?

1. As a friend

"Not a single sparrow can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it. And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows." Matthew 10:29-31

".....God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Hebrews 13:5

2. With a call

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:21

3. As a judge

Principle: "Justice delayed is not justice denied".

How should we act in the face of evil?

1. Accept that life is unfair.

"In this world you will have trouble." John 16:33

2. Do the right thing anyway.

"Learn to do right. See that justice is done, help those who are oppressed." Isaiah 1:17

3. Wait for God's reward

"These temporary troubles are winning for us a permanent reward out of all proportion to our pain." 2 Corinthians 4:17

4. Refuse to be bitter

"Some people have no happiness at all. They live and die with bitter hearts." Job 21:25

5. Dare to trust in God

"Trust in God at all times; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge." Psalms 62:8

Life group questions:

1. How have difficulties, challenges, and even pain shaped your character and values. How are you different today as a result of the problems you've had to face in life?
2. Can you ever imagine thanking God someday for how suffering has molded you?
3. If you were God, how would you have designed the world differently? How would people form character in your utopia? Would they be motivated to seek God in the midst of their pleasures?
4. If you supernaturally intervened to eliminate evil, where would you draw the line – to prevent murder? Theft? Slander? Evil thoughts that may prompt evil actions?
5. At what point are people turned into puppets who lack free will and therefore cannot truly express love?